

REMARKS

Claims 1-12 stand rejected as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,592,556 (Schwed); Claims 13-15, 17-19, 21-23 stand rejected as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,845,450 (Kobayashi). The rejections are respectfully traversed.

The subject matter of dependent claims 16, 20 and 24 has been indicated as allowable. Claim 16 has been amended into independent form and is, accordingly, believed to be allowable.

Independent claims 1, 9, 13 and 21 are amended to clarify the claim language regarding predetermined flag values without effecting the scope of the claims. New claims 25-31 have been added.

Neither Schwed nor Kobayashi anticipate the claims. For example neither reference discloses or suggests the last element of claim 1, namely:

said specific write-protectable area being rendered read-only only when a predetermined flag value is stored at said flag address whereby encryption key data may be stored in said specific area of said non-volatile RAM in connection with storing said predetermined flag value at said flag address such that stored encryption data cannot be altered by a subsequent write operation to said non-volatile RAM.

Both references address the storing of encryption data. However, there is no disclosure of storing such data in a "specific write-protectable area" that contains a "flag address" which controls whether or not the area is read only. The references do not disclose such "specific write-protectable area" that is

rendered "read-only only when a predetermined flag value is stored at said flag address" as set forth in the independent claims.

Until there is a predetermined flag values stored at the flag address, the "specific write-protectable area" remains available for encryption configuration, thereafter it is secured as read-only. Such a feature is not disclosed or suggested in the cited references.

As explained in the application on page 5, line 23 et seq., there may be more than one "predetermined flag value" that renders the "specific write-protectable area" as read-only. In the example, both "H" and "h" values can be used as a flag value to make the area read only.

This is also consistent with the limitations of, for example, dependent claim 3 which defines first and second predetermined flag values. Note that per claim 3, one predetermined flag value enables a particular encryption and the other predetermined flag value disables encryption altogether. In either case, the "specific write-protectable area" becomes read-only when one of the predetermined flag values is stored at the key flag address within the "specific write-protectable area."

Claims 4, 12, 16 and 24 cover the case where a "specific value" is initially stored at the key flag address within the "specific write-protectable area." to render that area "write enabled." Once any other value is stored at

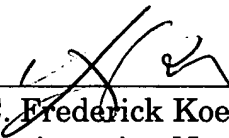
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the key flag address, the "specific write-protectable area" becomes read-only per the limitations of claims 4, 12, 16 and 24. Neither Schwed nor Kobayashi disclose or suggest control of a "specific write-protectable area" through the use of a key flag address within the area itself.

For the above reasons, Applicant respectfully submits that the presently claimed invention is patentable over the prior art. Reconsideration and allowance of the claims is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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